UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/AC.46/1998/3/Add.46
13 October 1998

ENGLISH
Original: SPANISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Intergovernmental working group of
experts on human rights of migrants
Third session
Geneva, 23-27 November 1998

INFORMATION AND COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS, UNITED NATIONS BODIES, SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

ANNEX

Reply received from the Government of Venezuela
dated 14 July 1998

GE.98-14372 (E)

CONSOLIDATED REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS

1. General data: (a) The current population of Venezuela for 1998 is estimated at more than 23 million. The most recent 10-year census in 1990 put it at 18,105,265, including 17,082,006 Venezuelans born in the country, 325,180 Venezuelans born abroad, 302,857 naturalized Venezuelans, 610,086 aliens and 87,993 persons of undeclared nationality. (b) Also, according to the government census in 1990, the main figures by continent and nationality of origin for the "population born abroad" were as follows: America: 686,716, including 529,924 Colombians, 28,267 Peruvians, 23,464 Ecuadorians, 20,820 Chileans and 17,436 Dominicans; Africa: 2,937; Asia: 32,462, of whom 7,250 were Lebanese and 6,160 were mainland Chinese; and Europe: 255,899, including 104,037 Spaniards, 68,277 Portuguese, 61,800 Italians and 4,669 Germans. (c) No exact figures are available concerning Venezuelan nationals abroad. Historically, Venezuela has always been a country of immigration. However, the economic crisis which occurred in 1983 and whose repercussions are still being felt today, gave rise to a certain emigratory flow. Many thousands of Venezuelans (possibly 50,000 or more) are now thought to be living with regular or irregular status in the United States, mainly in the cities of Miami and New York. (d) Any alien who is a legal resident can work in Venezuela, without requiring special authorization. (e) Estimates of the number of irregular immigrants in Venezuela range very widely, from a few hundred thousand to several million. This applies particularly to Colombian nationals who emigrated to Venezuela, mainly for economic reasons. The only reliable figures on this question are probably those obtained from the 1981 General Register of Aliens, which was designed to regularize the status of undocumented persons and which counted 246,194 immigrants, 93.2 per cent of them being Colombian citizens, while the remaining 7.3 per cent were also Latin Americans, from Ecuador (22.91 per cent), the Dominican Republic (20.6 per cent) and Peru (14.75 per cent). The numerically large flow of foreigners (mainly Colombians) to Venezuela during the 1970s and early 1980s seems to have lost momentum, or even decreased, in recent years as a result of the country's economic recession.

2. In Venezuela one cannot really speak of government measures to strengthen the protection of the human rights of migrants as distinct from those measures being taken to benefit the Venezuelan population as a whole.

In this connection, however, mention should perhaps be made of the practice established for some time whereby Colombian and other illegal immigrants being repatriated are accompanied by staff of the Government Procurator's Office to make sure that these operations are effected without any violation of the human rights of those concerned.

3. No manifestations of racism, xenophobia or other forms of discrimination against migrants are known to have occurred in Venezuela, except that the border dispute with Colombia has at times led some organs of the national press to use chauvinistic language in regard to Colombia and Colombians.

4. Venezuela has ratified ILO Conventions Nos. 97 and 143 concerning migrant workers. However, it has not as yet ratified the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Moreover, no steps are known to have been taken in this direction.